

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Biographic Information Division

SCHERPENBERG, Albert Hilger van

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Dr. Albert Hilger van Scherpenberg, a veteran professional diplomat who has served since January 1958 as State Secretary of the West German Foreign Office, has been appointed Ambassador to the Holy See in Rome and is expected to assume his new post in late spring of 1961. As State Secretary, a position equivalent to that of an Under Secretary of State, he bears responsibility in the Foreign Office for the Divisions of Personnel and Administration, Legal Affairs, Cultural Affairs, Commercial Policy and Development Aid. Dr. van Scherpenberg, who was chief of the Commercial Policy Division of the Foreign Office from early 1955 until 1958, has been concerned with economic and commercial matters almost continuously since he entered the Foreign Office in 1926.

Van Scherpenberg was born October 4, 1899 in Munich, the son of Dutch parents, and became a German citizen in 1922. He studied law at the universities of Munich, Freiburg, and Geneva, and in 1926 entered the Foreign Office. He spent seven years (1928-35) as vice consul responsible for economic questions at the German Embassy in London and nine years (1935-44) at the Foreign Office in Berlin, where he was assigned to a section dealing with commercial policy matters affecting German relations with the Scandinavian countries. His career as a diplomat under Hitler was brought to a close in July 1944, when he was sentenced to two years in Ravensbrück concentration camp for failure to report anti-Nazis to the Gestapo.

After the German collapse in 1945 van Scherpenberg joined the Foreign Trade Section of the Bavarian Ministry of Economics and a year later transferred to the Federal Economic Administration as a specialist on the sterling bloc countries. He joined the newly-created Federal Ministry of Economics in 1949 as deputy chief of the section dealing with foreign trade policy, and in this capacity he played a very important role in reestablishing German international trade relations. He returned to the Foreign Office in 1953 as a section chief and in 1955 was appointed chief of the Commercial Policy Division. In 1957 he visited the United States as a participant in the Foreign Leader Exchange Program.

Dr. van Scherpenberg, a Protestant, is married to the former Inge Schacht, a daughter of the famous financier, Hjalmar Schacht, and is the father of three sons and a daughter. He speaks fluent English, French, and Dutch. In his relationships with U.S. officials, he has proved to be pro-western and extremely friendly. It is believed that van Scherpenberg intends to retire from government service when he reaches retirement age in 1968.